

CLAIMS:

1. A document printout device for receiving and printing out digital documents, the
5 printout device comprising:

a store of digital certificates, each certificate being associated with a received
digital document; and

an audit log comprising a list of received document entries, each entry containing
a reference to one of the certificates in the store and a unique identifier associated with a
10 received digital document.

2. A device according to Claim 1, wherein the device is arranged to carry out an on-line
authentication of a received certificate held in the store of received documents.

15 3. A device according to Claim 2, wherein the device is arranged to carry out a batch of
on-line authentications of received certificates held in the store of received documents.

4. A device according to Claim 1, wherein each entry in the audit log contains a digest of
the received document to which it relates.

20 5. A device according to Claim 4, further comprising a hash algorithm for creating a
digest of a digital document and a receiving module for receiving a digital representation
of a previously printed out document, wherein the device is arranged to create a digest of
the digital representation of the previously printed out document and to compare the
25 newly created digest with the corresponding digest stored in the audit log.

6. A device according to Claim 5, wherein the device is arranged to send either a stored
digest or a newly created digest of a document to its original sender and to verify the
authenticity of the document back to its source by considering the transmitted results of a
30 comparison of digests carried out at the source.

7. A device according to Claim 5, wherein the receiving module is a document scanning module.

5 8. A device according to Claim 1, wherein each entry in the audit log contains the time and date of receipt of each digital document.

9. A device according to Claim 1, wherein the unique identifier is an alphanumeric code and the device further comprises an input module for inputting the code to access the relevant entry in the audit log.

10. In a facsimile machine adapted for receiving and printing out digital documents, a device comprising:

a store of digital certificates, each certificate being associated with a received
15 digital document; and

an audit log comprising a list of received document entries, each entry containing a reference to one of the certificates in the store and a unique identifier associated with a received digital document.

20 11. A method of authenticating the identity of a sender of a received digital document, the method comprising:

using a unique identifier printed on the received document to search for a corresponding record in a list of received document records;

referencing a digital certificate associated with the selected record, the certificate
25 being one of a store of certificates of received documents; and
carrying out an on-line authentication of the certificate.